



PRESS RELEASE

HH SHEIKH KHALIFA'S HOUBARA CONSERVATION STRATEGY BOOSTED BY QATAR COOPERATION

Abu Dhabi's expertise shared in effort to conserve bird at the heart of local culture

Abu Dhabi, xx February 2014: 1,065 Asian Houbara from the International Fund for Houbara Conservation's world-leading captive breeding programme have been provided to a breeding centre in Qatar. The Rawdat Al Faras Houbara Breeding Centre received the birds in order to establish a full breeding flock in the Gulf country. The provision of the birds to another country for captive breeding represents a considerable expansion of the President of the UAE, HH Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan's strategy to ensure that there are sustainable, wild populations of the iconic bird across its entire range.

HE Mohamed Al Bowardi, Deputy Chairman of the IFHC Board, said: "This is a ground-breaking move in the history of Houbara conservation. The leadership and commitment of HH Sheikh Khalifa ensures that Abu Dhabi continues to build upon over thirty years of experience and expertise, which enables us lead the way in this important endeavour. We have a duty to ensure future generations can continue to experience the Houbara in the wild, while also preserving our cultural values, and the Abu Dhabi holistic model for conservation is proving to be the most effective approach to achieving these objectives. International cooperation is a vital component of Abu Dhabi's strategy for the Houbara and we are very happy to share our knowledge with partners across the range of the bird. I want to express my thanks to the Government and people of Qatar in helping us spread the effort to conserve the Houbara."

The 1,065 Asian Houbara provided to Qatar are in addition to an initial 334 provided to the Gulf state in March 2013. As a result the 1,399 birds will form a significant initial breeding flock, from which to produce Houbara chicks for future breeding and release. As well as providing live Houbara, Abu Dhabi has also offered its expertise, in areas such as breeding protocols and building specifications, to all countries in the Houbara range states to support the expansion of the programme initiated by the Emirate in the 1970s.

Mohamed Saleh Al Baidani, Director General of IFHC said: "IFHC's Houbara programme is at the cutting-edge of conservation. As a result of the great success we have achieved in breeding the Houbara in captivity, we are able to share our unparalleled knowledge and understanding of the Houbara with other conservation projects in the bird's range, which, subsequently, increase the chances of ensuring we reach our ultimate objective for wild populations of the Houbara to thrive in the future."

The ground-breaking move to supply Houbara for breeding in Qatar follows last year's move by IFHC to give 1,000 Asian Houbara to the same country for release into protected zones. In 2013 captive-bred birds were provided to Kuwait and Yemen in a coordinated attempt at restoring resident, wild populations of Houbara across the Arabian Peninsula, which were in historical decline as a result of poaching, unregulated hunting and habitat degradation.



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About The International Fund for Houbara Conservation (IFHC)

Established in 2006 by Royal Decree from His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi to oversee the conservation and restoration of the wild Houbara populations to numbers that will ensure its long-term preservation while maintaining a traditional pillar of Arabian heritage - Falconry.

The IFHC includes:

- National Avian Research Centre (NARC) - Sweihan – Abu Dhabi – UAE
- Emirates Centre for Wildlife Propagation (ECWP) – Kingdom of Morocco
- Sheikh Khalifa Houbara Breeding Centre (SKHBC-KZ)- Republic of Kazakhstan
- Sheikh Khalifa Houbara Breeding Centre (SKHBC-AD)-Abu Dhabi-UAE

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